Amendments to the Claims:

None

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (previously presented): A method for determining the endpoint of a chemical mechanical polish process, comprising:

providing a semiconductor wafer with a polish surface;

mounting said wafer adjacent a reference surface;

polishing said polish surface using a chemical mechanical polishing process;

sequentially exposing said polish surface and said reference surface to a light source;

at a first time t_o, measuring a signal S_x from said polish surface;

at a second time t_1 following t_o, measuring a signal S_B from said reference surface;

deriving a signal S_{tx} given by $S_{tx} = f(S_x, S_B)$; and

determining an endpoint of said chemical mechanical polishing process when the derived signal S_{tx} equals a predetermined level.

Claim 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (original): The method of claim 2 wherein said signal S_x is a maximum signal obtained.

Claim 4 (original): The method of claim 2 wherein said signal S_x is an average signal obtained between a plurality of position points.

Claim 5 (original): The method of claim 1 wherein said derived signal is a difference between S_x and S_B.

Claim 6 (previously presented): An endpoint method for chemical mechanical polishing, comprising:

providing a semiconductor wafer with a polish surface;

mounting said wafer adjacent a reference surface;

polishing said polish surface using a chemical mechanical polishing process;

sequentially exposing said polish surface and said reference surface to a light source;

at a first time t_o, measuring a signal S_x from said polish surface;

at a second time t_1 following t_o, measuring a signal S_B from said reference surface;

deriving a signal S_{tx} given by $S_{tx} = f(S_x, S_B)$ wherein said derived signal S_{tx} is a difference between S_x and S_B; and

determining an endpoint of said chemical mechanical polishing process when the derived signal S_{tx} equals a predetermined level.

Claim 7 (canceled)

Claim 8 (original): The method of claim 7 wherein said signal S_x is a maximum signal obtained.

Claim 9 (original): The method of claim 7 wherein said signal S_x is an average signal obtained between a plurality of position points.

Claim 10 (canceled)

Claim 11 (canceled)